

OBSERVATIONS

Upon a

TREATISE

Intituled,

OF

HUMANE

REASON.

LONDON:

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OBSERVATIONS *upon*
a Treatise of Hu-
 mane Reason.

THe Title of this
 Treatise being of
 Humane Reason,
 and no more, a man at first
 sight might expect to find a
 Discourse of the Nature of
 it; of Reason what it is; and
 of Humane Reason as distin-
 A 2 guished

guished from some other ; but of either of these nothing occurs in the whole Treatise.

2. *The beginning of the Treatise* importeth a search into the nature and quality of the Authors Religion, and of that indeed the Treatise gives us a little further account, than it doth of what the Title doth import, but yet that is so little and only in general, (*viz.*) what his own reason doth direct, that if it be no more than that, we may reasonably suspect the one as well as the other to be very imperfect and defective.

3. For of the weakness and imperfection of his Reasoning

tiocination the very next pages give us a sufficient experiment, where he layes down this position, That he must *first consider of the choice of a Guide for so long and so dangerous a Journey, &c.* and that *one had great need of a better Eye-sight than is left us by the fall of our first fore-fathers.* This Position I shall readily grant him, but then I shall expect a rational choice: for to consider of a choice where no choice is left us; or to make no choice when we may do it, and acknowledge it needful so to do, are both unreasonable. And yet into these inconveniencies doth our Author fall, and that (as

he saith) *after a long and serious debate.* For if our own reason be *the only North-Star which God hath given us for the right steering of our course,* as he saith it is, then is there no choice left us, but *Hobson's choice*; that or none; which is no liberty of choice at all.

§. 4. But he mentions some Guides recommended by men, as Revelation (*pag. 62.*) the Spirit, (*pag. 20.*) (28.) Scripture, (*p. 28.*) Church past or present (*p. 28.*) Authority, (21.) Tradition, (*p. 25.*) and therefore it may be said he makes choice of that alone which is left us by God. But if it be rightly con-

considered, we shall find he makes choice of none at all. For what is that which must make a search into the nature and quality of his Religion, and must consider of the choice of a Guide, is it not his Reason? So he saith expressly, *Election is a work so proper to Reason, that it cannot be done by any thing else,* (p. 89.) and according to his own position, must it not be a better guide than is left us by the fall of our first forefather? Reason therefore is the thing to be guided, and not the Guide it self. It is true in common speech we sometimes say, such a one is a Guide to himself. Yet that

signifies no more than that he hath none at all, or needs not any. But this in this case is contrary to his position, and indeed so is a great part of the design and drift of his Book; wherein he endeavours to prove that his own Reason is sufficient to conduct him in this so long and so dangerous a Journey, without any other Guide; that is without any at all.

§. 5. Let us therefore consider what reason may be found in this position, since we find little in any use he makes of the former. But first we must consider what is to be understood by the word *Reason*: which sometimes

times signifies the rational faculty ; sometimes the exercise of that faculty , otherwise called *Ratiocination* in general ; sometimes a particular Principle or Deduction of Reason, or the congruity that is between a thing and the principle from which it is or may be deduced. In the last sense it is not, nor can it here be taken. Nor will I do the Author that wrong to suppose he understood it in the first sense of the faculty without any exercise of it ; but of the faculty duly exercised.

§. 6. Now in the exercise of Reason or *Ratiocination*, these things are to be consi-

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dered ; The Faculty which is exercised, the Object about which it is exercised, and the media which it makes use of. For Reason is a discerning Faculty, and much like a Judge sitting in Judgment, who if he be skillful in the Laws , can of himself determine what is right and wrong in the matter of Fact depending before him, if the truth of the Fact be known ; but what is the truth of the fact, he cannot judge without sufficient evidence of it. But that the rational Faculty of it self without any exercise or Ratiocination, or without the use of any Media by a meer Intuition, can discover the

the end proposed, which is happiness, and wherein it doth consist, and the way and means to attain it, the Author doth not say (or however doth not intend though he sometimes contradicts himself,) but rather the contrary, that there are *Directions* which it may and ought to take, (p. 2.) *Helps* which God hath prepared for us, which Reason will dictate to it self that it is to use, (p. 5, 6.) *Means* which are allowed by God to our Understandings, for this Examination, (p. 16, 67.)

§. 7. If this therefore be his meaning, that there is in man a natural ability of search-

searching (and discovering) spiritual truths by the due use of sufficient Directions, Helps and Means, he saith that which is very true; but then,
 1. This is that which I think no man can with Reason or doth deny; and is therefore very impertinent to be disputed. 2. The only question then to be resolved and determined, will be what those Directions, Helps and Means, are which our Understanding or Reason is, and ought to take and make use of, but that he no where shews us, and therefore his Discourse is very lame and defective: or if he doth, it is by chance rather than in any strict course

course of reasoning, as (p. 67.) where he saith *all things else*, that is besides our Understanding, *are without us, and may serve for Helps and Directions in our search*, yet this is said only by the by, and that too only so in general, as is little to the purpose.

§. 8. 3. I shall here leave it to our Authors consideration, whether those Directions, and Helps may not more reasonably be said to be the guide of our Reason in its search, than Reason which is to make the search, and therefore to be guided, be said to be the guide it self, and whether these or some of these may not more properly be

be called the North-Star, whereby Reason is to steer its course, than can Reason it self which is to steer by it. And if so, then have we found out Guides enough, whereof our Author might have taken his choice; which because he hath not done, he cannot be thought to have proceeded reasonably according to his own principles.

§. 9. But to help him out, though he proposeth none in particular, yet seeing he seemeth to exclude some from being necessary, we will therefore suppose he intends all things without us except those, which he doth or seemeth

eth to exclude from being necessary ; and consider what reason he hath to make choice of the rest , and to reject those as unnecessary. Some perhaps might think because he saith all things without us may serve for Helps and Directions, that therefore it is not reasonable to reject any, that is any thing that may serve to that purpose : but I shall not insist upon that : for we are not here to consider what may serve, but what is needful and necessary.

§. 10. Now the things which he excludes, or sometimes seemeth to exclude as needless and unnecessary, are
 Divine

Divine Revelation or Illumination, which he calls private Spirit, and humane Authority and Tradition. The rest therefore must be sufficient for our Reason to steer by in this journey or search.

11. But how is this consistent with what he affirmed at first, that one had need of a better eye-sight than is left us by our first fore-father? But I pass by many other Absurdities and Contradictions, and therefore leaving this, will examine what reason he hath for this choice; *viz.* to choose some as sufficient, and to reject the rest as needless.

12. And

12. And first for Divine Revelation and Illumination and the true Spirit, he acknowledgeth these to be in themselves infallible, (*p.* 20. 62.) only we may mistake that to be such which is not such in truth: and for humane Authority and Tradition these are fallible in themselves, that is, they may be false: but yet notwithstanding they may possibly be true; and if they be so, we cannot be misguided by them. So that the fallibility in both proceeds not from the Media if they be true, but from the weakness of our Reason which may fail us in the distinguishing between true and false; and

and this is plainly contrary to what he asserts.

§. 13. But it may be replied that though our Reason may err in distinguishing these things, yet it may proceed more certainly in the use of other Media. But then ought he to have shewed, what those Media are; that they are such as would infallibly conduct us to our end, and that our Reason is able to make use of them without error; which he hath no where done, and therefore his choice is unreasonable upon a double account; 1. In preferring some before others without any reason for it. 2. In excluding some where

where he hath no reason to conclude the rest to be sufficient without them ; and therefore in reason should rather make use of all.

§. 15. Nor hath he only failed of reason for what he saith, but doth imprudently furnish us with reasons against himself. For what is *Authority* but the Judgment or Reason of other men, whom we suppose to have better means of knowing the truth than we our selves have ? and why is this to be excluded, but because it is fallible ? and why then not much more our own Reason ? Besides he acknowledgeth our own reason may be seduced

duced, (p. 59.) tells us particularly which are the three great Subborners and Corrupters of Humane Reason, (p. 55.) and acknowledgeth that the weakness of our Understanding may deceive us; (p. 4.) Nay saith expresly, that one had need of a better eye-sight than is left us by our first fore-father; and if all this be not sufficient, he hath given us sufficient experiment in this very Treatise of his ignorance of other Media, or of the insufficiency of them whatever they be, or at least of the fallibility of his own Reason, even after a long and serious debate.

16. But we must take notice *what kind of infallibility* it is which our Author meaneth; for he hath several kinds of infallibility, though he expressly mentions but one. For the infallibility of a Guide, I conceive, saith he, to be only this, that it cannot fail to bring us to that end for which we chose to be guided by it; and if to this end there happen to be a thousand several ways, it is a Guide no less infallible as to the end, if it lead us through a long, and unpleasant, and obscure Tract, than if it conducted us by a short, a delightful, and an open Road; for not the goodness of the passage, but the certainty

tainty of not missing the end is that which constitutes this kind of infallibility. (p. 27.) So we have here a fallible infallible Guide; fallible as to the way and means, but infallible as to the end. I will not stand here to examine our Author's reason and prudence in the choice of such a Guide, after all his considerations. Only we may observe how reasonable a man he is, and easily satisfied in the most weighty affair of our whole life, with any thing that he thinks will but serve the turn, and do his business at last, though with never so many difficulties and inconveniences in the way.

17. But why is it infallible *as to the end*, though fallible as to the way and means? why? Because though its weakness may deceive us and lead us into error, yet that error is not hurtful, (p. 4.) and those who commit themselves to the guidance of their own understanding (the only Guide which he makes choice of) if they do commit themselves wholly to it, are as safe on the left hand as on the right, as secure of happiness in their errors, as others are, who are otherwise guided even in the truths which they happen to fall into (p. 65.) And this he saith is his first Argument to induce us to commit
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our selves *wholly* to our Reason in the search of Divine and Religious Verities, which is drawn from the certainty of safety this way, and the great hazard of it any other. For as for Vision, or Revelation, or Authority, he had said before, *if they prescribe truth we have good fortune in our Obedience, and meerly good fortune: but if they draw us into error, we have nothing to say for our excuse, because we have nothing to alledge for our obedience to them,* p. 62, 63. So that he plainly here excludes these.

§. 18. But why are not the errors of our own Understanding dangerous or hurt-

hurtful? why, first, because *the Commandment of God is not to find out truth, but to endeavour the finding it.* But

1. Doth he not here admit another Guide than his own Reason? 2. How know we the Commandment of God, but by immediate Revelation, or by Tradition from those who had immediate Revelation? and is not this to admit what he had but just before excluded? 3. Or doth that Command which requires us to search and endeavour to find the truth, prohibite us the use of any means which may serve us to that purpose? 4. Have we not as expresse a Command that we should

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not

not lean to our own understanding (*Prov. 3. 5.*) but receive instruction; and that often reiterated and inculcated? 5. Do we not in matters of Law concerning our Estates; and in matters of Physick concerning our Health; and in all other matters consult with those who are better skilled therein than our selves, and follow their advice and direction; and reckon it reason and prudence so to do, and folly and madness to do otherwise? 6. And since the Divine Providence hath so ordered the condition of Mankind for many excellent Reasons that we must necessarily stand in need
of

of one anothers help and assistance ; and that in those things wherein some should stand in need of help, others should be able to give it : what excuse can he have, who willfully neglects, or conceitedly rejects that help and assistance which he might have had ? especially if God himself, as the great Lord and Father of all, hath afforded us any such Helps and Means for all in common ?

§. 19. Nor is he more considerate and lucky in his conclusion than in the choice of his principle. For thus he concludes : *Now he that bids you search is cruel and barbarous in his mockery, if he knows*

you have no power or faculty to search as he commands you : there is therefore , saith he , in man a natural abillity in searching spiritual truths , and that can be nothing else but his own understanding ; (p.66.)

And is this the thing that he hath taken all this pains to prove after a long and serious debate ; that there is in man a natural abillity in searching spiritual truths ? If this be all , I think there is no man that understands what reason is , but will easily grant him this and more , that there is in man a faculty and ability not only of searching , but also of finding such spiritual truths as are necessary for him

him to know, if he neglect not the use of such Helps, Directions and Means as he may have and make use of; and therefore his whole Discourse is idle and impertinent. But if his meaning be, that this faculty is of its self sufficient, without the use of any other Helps, Directions or Means than is left us by the fall of our first-forefather; that this Argument doth not prove, and if it did, it would be contrary to his own position.

§. 20. But he cannot leave this first Reason for the confirmation of his first Argument without another touch of his expert and infallible

Guide, and therefore adds :
*Neither to any thing else can
 the command be directed, since
 all things else are without us,
 and may serve for Helps and
 Directions in our search, but
 cannot be our search it self; a
 wonderful discovery indeed,
 and deserves to be applauded
 with a *ὦν οὐρανὸς*; for other-
 wise a man of a very shallow
 reason might have mistaken
 his Helps and Directions for
 his search it self. But had he
 also shewed us what use we
 are to make of this caution,
 we had been yet more be-
 holding to him.*

§. 21. Secondly, He saith,
*We blasphemously accuse God of
 Injustice, if we say (for so
 I sup-*

I suppose he means) that he punisheth us for an error which we could not avoid. But who saith so? They who say he hath given us means sufficient to come to the knowledge of the Truth? or rather he who saith we have great need of a better eye-sight than is left us by the fall of our first fore-father, and yet affirms, that he hath left us no other Guide than our own Reason? And that which he adds: That *as the liberty of the Will, and the possibility we have of doing the contrary, makes us suffer justly for our evil actions; so the possibility our Understanding had to have discovered and*

tertained the truth, renders us liable to condemnation, for ill beliefs. To whom doth it belong? and who are they that are ~~rendred~~ liable to condemnation for their ill belief? they who receive the truth in the love of it, or they who rejecting the means to come to the knowledge of it, when Light is come into the World, love Darkness rather than Light, because their deeds are evil?

§. 22. Thirdly, He thinketh it uncharitable to believe that errors in Faith are damnable, because it strikes out so great a part of mankind out of the Book of Life. But if this be all his reason, he
may

may as well say the same of errors in manners also, and that would be a welcome Doctrine to some, and not unwelcome to himself, as we may guess by p. 30, 31.

23. Fourthly, He saith that *we ought not to teach that any errors in belief overthrow our hopes of Salvation, unless we could likewise give a Catalogue of those which do so.* But he might as well have said we ought not to believe there are any fools or mad-men in the World, unless we could likewise give a Catalogue of all the kinds of folly or madness that men do or may fall into; and since he hath before affirmed, that men may

be liable to condemnation for ill beliefs, without giving us any Catalogue of those ill beliefs which makes them liable to it ; this indeed is an Argument of his own weakness and impertinence, but no confirmation of his Argument.

24. His fifth Reason reaches only to invincible Ignorance, and errors in things whereof we cannot know the truth, and have no means to come to the knowledge of it ; *viz.* *because in this case we cannot know our fault, to repent of it ; and therefore makes nothing for them who neglect any means which are offered them, and which they may make*

make use of if they will; especially if they make such a choice as our Author hath done, and reject the rest. For such are liable to condemnation for their errors, by our Authors own Doctrine.

25. His sixth and last Reason for confirmation of this Argument, is, That *the great probability and appearance of truth on all sides, even the erring ones, ought to make us believe that God will not punish those that err.* But this being indefinitely affirmed, is a plain contradiction of his own Doctrine; that *the possibility our Understanding had to have discovered, and entertained.*

tained the truth, renders us liable to condemnation for ill beliefs, p. 67. And that our Understanding has such a possibility he expressly affirms; For he argues that there is in man a natural ability of searching spiritual truths, (p. 66.) and tells us there are helps which God has prepared for us to that purpose, and those our Reason will dictate to her self that she is to use, (p. 5.) and if it take such directions as it ought and may do, and pursue them with care and constancy, it will bring us to the proposed end of our Journey, which is Happiness, (p. 2.) but it must then be well followed with constancy,

stancy, dilligence and sobriety,
 (p. 28.) we ought to make a
serious and long enquiry, ac-
cording to the best extent of
those means which are allowed
by God to our understanding
for this examination, (p. 16.)
 and therefore those who are
 wanting in these necessary di-
 ligences which are required,
 (p. 4.) can have no plea a-
 gainst the rigour of their Sen-
 tence, because they desert them-
 selves as well as God, (p. 33.)
 according to our Authors
 own Doctrine, notwithstanding
 his pretence of probabili-
 ties on both sides.

26. Besides that there are
 great probabilities on both
 sides is too universally affir-
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med, to be granted without any reason for it, and were that granted in some particulars, yet would not that be sufficient, unless they were also proved or granted to be equal; for they might be great on one side, and yet be greater on the other, and that difference might be sufficient to direct ones choice. But the truth is, for *natural Religion* the Arguments are more than probable, and what-ever is alledged against it far less, being nothing else but bare wild far-fetcht imaginary Possibilities, and those also involved with such difficulties as are not to be solved, or at least have not yet

yet been solved by any. And for *revealed Religion*, if it be really such, what probabilities can reasonably be opposed to Divine Revelation? only then the only question will be, whether it be really a Divine Revelation? and as to that the Religion of the ancient *Hebrews* and the *Christian* are not only the only Religions which can justly pretend to be of Divine Revelation, but as they mutually confirm one another, so have they each of them as great evidence that they are of Divine Revelation, as any matter of fact at so great a distance is capable of, and I think if all circumstances be well

well considered, greater than for any thing else of that Antiquity can be produced. It is true, there may be an equality of probabilities on both sides in some questions, but then these are no parts of natural Religion, or Articles of Faith, but meer Philosophical or School questions.

27. His second Argument is this; *as invisible Objects we receive confidently, and rest in the report of the sight, because nature hath ordained and accommodated it accordingly for that purpose, without appeal from it either to other senses, or to Revelations, or the eyes of other men; &c. so*
ought

ought we as entirely and absolutely to resign our belief to the dictates of our own understanding in things intelligible, which are as properly and naturally the Object thereof, as things visible are of the eyesight.

§. 28. But this first part of his Argument being universally affirmed, is false. For we often appeal from our own sight, 1. To our other senses, and again from them to it, in things which may be perceived by diverse senses, as the form of many things may, both by sight and by touch, &c. 2. To our Reason, by which we discover the errors and failings of our sight

sight and other senses, as in the bigness of the Sun, which our sight represents to us as no bigger than a Seive, but our Reason discovers to be bigger than the Earth; and in diverse other instances.

3. To the sight of others, in things which require either greater sharpness of sight than we our selves naturally or accidentally have; or greater skill in discerning the parts, compofure or differences of things; wherein a skillful Artist will quickly discover what a vulgar eye will many times hardly discern, though it be shewed unto him. Again, our frequent use of Spectacles and Microscopes,

Microscopes, and Prospective-Glasses in many cases is an argument of our sense of the weakness and imperfection of our sight, and that therefore we cannot confidently rest satisfied in the report of it alone. Besides we may be sufficiently satisfied of the truth of many things which are or were in their time the proper Objects of sight, though we our selves, by reason of their distance either in time or place from us, could not nor cannot have any sight of them. Lastly, The most piercing and clear discerning sight in the world can perceive nothing without the help of Light.

§. 29. We may therefore reasonably retort this Argument against himself, that as we do not rest in the judgment of our own sight; or any other sense, when we find reason to suspect it, or can have better information by any other of our own senses or faculties, or from others, or by the use of certain means or instruments; so neither ought we to rest and rely upon our own Reason or Understanding, in things wherein others are able and willing to inform us better. And as we are often satisfied by the Tradition and Authority of others concerning many things which
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are the proper Objects of sight, though we our selves had never the opportunity to see them ; so ought we likewise to rest satisfied concerning things intelligible, with the Tradition and Authority of those who have had sufficient means to know the truth of them, if we have reason to believe them, honest and faithful in what they say, though we our selves have not had the means and opportunity to know the same, but only by their information. Lastly, As our sight is capable of seeing and discerning its proper Objects, and yet without a proper Medium, Light, can actually

actually see nothing at all ; so our Reason though capable of understanding Divine Verities, yet without a proper Medium, which is natural or supernatural Revelation, may reasonably be believed actually to understand none at all, though naturally disposed to receive them, upon any proper information. By *natural Revelation*, I mean that discovery of Divine Verities which is made by the works of Nature, and may be understood by a serious contemplation of them.

30. His third Argument is, that *this Opinion is most agreeable to the good of Humane*

Humane Society. But what is this Opinion? That every one ought to commit himself wholly to his own Reason, and the guidance of his own Understanding in the search of Divine and Religious Verities? That was it which he hath hitherto laboured to prove. But here he runs from the point, and changing the question, concludes, *That every man ought quietly to enjoy his own Religion.* I think there is some difference between these two questions: but I pass by many such instances of the ability of his Guide, and therefore will not insist upon this.

§. 31. But admitting this to be the question, how does he prove it: For all Wars, saith he, of late Ages have been either really for Religion, or at least that hath been one of the chief pretences; which if it were quite taken away, it would be difficult for those men who disguise their Ambition, with it to draw the people into the miseries and uncertainties either of a civil or foreign War, &c. In our late Wars with the Dutch, Religion was no part of the pretence on either side; were they then really for Religion, though that was not pretended? Was our Author privy to any

any such Intrigues and My-
steries of State? I think he
will not say it.

§. 32. But admit that most
have been so. Is Religion
therefore to be quite taken
away? for so his words may
be construed; and is this the
way to promote the good of
Humane Society? But what
good shall we then leave it?
Must we not then by the
same Reason take away what-
ever good may be pretended
to justify a War? For pre-
tences are usually sought
from the best things that may
be alledged.

§. 33. But admit his mean-
ing be only of the pretence
of Religion, How shall that

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be

be quite away? By planting
this Doctrin in mens minds,
 and making it the main and
 general ground of all Religions,
 That every man ought quietly
 to enjoy his own? But what if
 this be false, ought it then
 notwithstanding to be en-
 deavoured? Or if it be true,
 how shall it be planted in
 mens minds? How shall they
 be convinced of it? for if
 we must therefore believe it
 to be true, because then we
 should believe that we ought
 not to fight for Religion;
 by the same reason we must
 believe that we ought not
 to fight at all, or for any
 thing else; It ought there-
 fore to be proved by better
 Argu-

Arguments than any our Author hath yet produced.

34. His last defence of this Cause, as he calls it, returns again to the former question, and is this, *That it is impossible that ever any man should have been, is, or can be guided by any thing else but his own Reason; as in other things, so also in matters of Religion.* If he means only that it is impossible that any man should be guided in matters of Religion without his Reason, he saith that which no man who hath any measure of reason doth deny; for we cannot apprehend a proposition of Faith without Reason,

son, Faith it self being a rational assent to Authority ; and therefore he is very impertinent to use all those words to prove it : If that it is impossible that he should be guided by any thing else but his own Reason, without the use of any Helps, Means or Directions ; he saith that which he hath not proved ; and he might with as much reason have said that it is impossible that he should see with any thing else but his own eyes, without the help of Light ; and besides contradicts his own positions and assertions : but if his meaning be, that it is impossible he should be guided in these matters

matters by any thing else but his own Reason making use of all those Helps, Means and Directions which God hath left us, or doth afford us, he is as impertinent as before; for that no man of reason doth deny.

35. By this which hath been said, it is sufficiently apparent, and by much more which might be observed it might be further confirmed, if it were not needless, that our Author hath plainly proved by an undeniable experiment, the truth of his assertion in the beginning of his Book, that he hath great need of a better eye-sight than is left him by the fall

of his first fore-father, and that he ought better to consider of the choice of some Guide, for what he hath hitherto followed is either none at all, or but a blind and a lame one, as he himself may well perceive by his own experience (a great Mistress of wise men) upon this trial which he hath made.

36. But let us grant him that his Reason is a proper Guide to be relied upon; though then we shall be at a loss, what it is that is to be guided by it; for if we say himself, then must we suppose himself to be something without or besides his reason;
or

or if we say his senses, then it seems his senses are to make the search into the nature and quality of his Religion, which must then be a sensible, not rational Religion, and perhaps a brutish Religion also; for if it be the Object of sense, the Brutes have senses as quick and strong as his. But let it be a Guide of what it will; Wherein and whereunto is it to be a Guide? Is it not in a search into the nature and quality of the Author's Religion, and to the discovery of it? This, and to communicate the effects of that search to others, if he should believe it profitable for them, is it, which

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according to the duty of every private person he resolved upon, and is the very design and scope of his Treatise. But it seems he hath either chosen an ill Guide; a blind Guide which hath not only led him out of the way, but erred also as to the end for which he chose it; or a lame or lazy Guide, which tired at the first setting out; or else he hath not well followed his Guide, with care, constancy, diligence and sobriety, according to that condition which he saith cannot be repeated too often: or if none of these, then certainly he hath either no Religion at all to be found out

out upon his search; or at least he believes not the effects of that search to be profitable to others, if he should communicate it to them. For his Treatise is spent in the consideration of his Guide, which it seems he chose first, and afterwards considered of the sufficiency of it; and having satisfied himself, and perhaps some others as wise as himself, of the excellency of his choice, with no less than four most wonderful Arguments, his Guide establisheth his bounds (what-ever they are) by which he knows his *ne plus ultra*, and he puts **THE END** where we might have

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Have expected T H E
S E A R C H to begin.

37. But perhaps we may conjecture from his own words what was the cause of this his mistake. He was confounded in his search, and frightened by the length and danger of that Journey, *whercin he sometimes met with no tract or path at all, and sometimes with so many, and those so contrary in the appearance of their first entry, that the Variety did confound him.* So that it seems either his Religion is very confused, or he was not only to consider of the choice of a Guide, but had his Religion also to choose; and his Guide
was

was not only to direct him in his search into the nature and quality of any Religion which he had, but what Religion he should make choice of; and therefore in this maze and confusion, it is no wonder if we find himself, and his Guide, and his Religion all confounded. Shall we then conclude his Reason to be his Religion? And that might seem to be his meaning; For happiness, he saith, is the proposed end of his Journey; and that is an end to which all expect to arrive by Religion; and to this he saith his own Reason will at last bring him. But if we take his Reason to be his Religion,

ligion, then what becomes of his Guide? He at first lost himself when he made choice of a Guide, then lost his Religion while he considered the sufficiency of his Guide; and now at last hath lost his Guide also. So that all is lost while in this confusion, he understandeth neither what he saith, nor whereof he affirmeth. It will be said perhaps 'tis no matter for a Guide, when he is come to his Journeys end; and therefore having now found his Religion, he hath no further need of it. But it was chosen to direct him in a search into the nature and quality of his Religion, and he

he ends his Treatise with the consideration of a Guide, and never enters into the search of the nature and quality of his Religion at all, and therefore we are denied the communication and profit of the effects of that search, and so we are but where we were before.

§. 38. To this perhaps it will be replied, our Author is of an implicit Reason, and his Religion is what his own Reason doth dictate, though at present he knows not well what that is; but it is sufficient, that though it may possibly lead him into errors, yet it will bring him at last even through them, to the proposed

posed end of his Journey ;
 nay he hath told us what
 ought to be the main and
 general ground of all Reli-
 gions, *viz.* That every man
 ought quietly to enjoy his
 own. (*p. 79.*) Besides since
 he so ingeniously confesseth
 in the beginning of his Trea-
 tise, his apprehension of be-
 ing confounded in his search ;
 we ought not to stand upon
 words or terms, or the Laws
 of Method with him, but
 take his meaning at the best,
 pick it out as well as we can,
 and make a charitable con-
 struction of it.

§. 39. And this indeed I
 am very willing to do, and
 therefore having endea-
 voured

voured to make him sensible of the weakness and insufficiency of that Guide, which with so much confidence he hath relied upon, as to reject or neglect all others; I will shew him that he hath met with a better Guide, only he did not take it to be such, because he never well and sufficiently considered the worth and excellency of it. For in conclusion of his Treatise he resolves that to *suspend absolutely from the belief of all Religion is almost impossible after the belief that there is a God, (p. 89.)* and his belief of that we must not question, since his words in many places import the same. But
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which Religion among so many as are professed in the World is to be chosen? This he confidently resolves; *If we weigh impartially the Motives and Arguments which every Religion can produce in its own defence; Reason it self will find more and much greater for the Christian than it can for any other belief whatsoever.* He adds, *And I am very confident that no man ever from a Christian became a Turk or a Jew, because his Reason told him that was a better Religion, &c.* (p. 26.) Again I believe, saith he, *that Reason it self will declare to every man in the World, that he ought to adhere*

adhere to the Christian, rather than to any other Religion whatsoever, if all things be proposed to him in a clear and impartial manner, (p. 31.) And again he denies not that Christ is the only source and cause of eternal felicity; for I acknowledge, saith he, there is no other Name under Heaven by which men can hope for Salvation, (p. 33.) He goes further and affirms, That the best and truest Humane Reason could not have found out of it self, that Wisdom of God in a Mystery, even that hidden Wisdom which God ordained before the World, which is the Mystery of Christ Jesus; but it was necessary it should
first

first be revealed by that Spirit, which can only search and discover the deep things of God. But as soon as the Spirit had revealed it, (which it did by Miracles, by fulfilling of Prophecies, and many other means of power and demonstration) even Humane Reason was able to behold and to confess it, (p. 57.)

40. So here we have found all those things which in this maze he had partly lost, partly rejected or neglected, and partly so confounded, that he knew not how to distinguish them. Here we have that which is to make the search, and that is Reason; that which
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is to be our Guide, and make the discovery to us, and that is the holy Spirit of God; and lastly, the true Religion for which we search, and that is the *Christian* Religion revealed by that Spirit. Nay here we have also those Helps and Directions; Miracles, fulfilling of Prophecies, and many other means of power and demonstration; in sum, all those Helps and Directions which God hath prepared for us, all those means which are allowed by him to our Understandings for this examination; and which Reason will dictate to its self that it ought to use, so that
 here

here we have all that can be wished or desired in the case: and yet something more than I have yet mentioned; for here we may meet with that Light, which if we do not foolishly shut our eyes against it, and through a vain conceited arrogance and presumption of our own natural perspicacity and ability, indispose ourselves for the reception of it, will restore us to a better eye-sight than was left us by the fall of our first forefather.

41. And would it not then be a great and inexcusable piece of imprudence and ingratitude against so
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excellent and bountiful a
 Benefactor, to reject, or
 neglect any of those Means,
 Helps and Directions, which
 he hath so graciously provi-
 ded for us, and commit our
 selves wholly to so blind
 and corrupt a Guide, as our
 own Understandings, which
 are or may be so easily
 suborned or allured, or else
 affrighted from its duty?
 would not the possibility our
 Understanding had to have
 discovered and entertained
 the truth, render us justly
 liable to condemnation for
 our errors? What plea could
 we have against the rigour
 of our sentence, if we should
 so desert our selves as well

as well as God, by rejecting or neglecting those means and directions which he hath prepared for our help.

42. But I hope better things of our Author, for though he had long rambled and strayed in that confusion and maze wherein he was, yet he comes home at last, and so explains his very last Argument, and thereby his meaning in the very conclusion of his Treatise, that it is very apparent, that he intends nothing more than that we ought not and indeed cannot believe or rest in, either Humane Authority or Divine Revelation, without our Reason or Understanding.

ing. For he there shews that Faith at last is resolved into a Syllogism, which is the proper work of the Understanding; and therefore we cannot believe without it, and truly for my part I am very apt to believe that he hath very little Reason or Understanding that should think otherwise. For I confess I know not how any man can so much as understand a proposition of Faith, (which is somewhat less than to believe it) without that faculty; or if he intends any thing more, it is only this, that we cannot or ought not to believe, unless we have or think we have reason for it.

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And this I think likewise as plain as the former; and that few or none have any Religion who do not think they have reason for it. So that to take his meaning at the best, by a charitable construction I suppose it is only this, that our Religion ought to be the Religion of our rational choice, and not meerly of our Education; for otherwise were we educated in the *Jewish* or *Mahometan* Religion, we ought to continue in that; and that this is his meaning, may be also perceived by what he says, p. 15, 16, 17. where he further adds, *That though we meet with some difficulties after a seri-*

serious consideration, Reason will not presently advise us to change, because it finds it self unable to untie the knot, but consider if it alter its judgment, it be able to satisfie all these defences which will be made for its former Opinion, and if it be over-matcht by the doubts on both sides rather continue its former Opinion, then make an innovation without advantage: and therefore since he acknowledgeth the Service of God (which all men comprehend under the notion of Religion) to be the most weighty affair of our whole life; admits that Authority is to be obeyed and submitted unto only not
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without Reason, But when there is Reason so to do; prefers the *Christian* Religion before all others as most reasonable to be believed; and shews us along chain of Reasons for the belief of the Scriptures, (of which upon enquiry he may find many other Arguments and Reasons to perswade, satisfy and confirm his belief) we ought in charity to pardon many confounded expressions and passages in his Treatise, partly not intelligible, partly not very reasonable, as coming from a man in a maze, who had not well recollected his Reason at first; and for these questions, whether every man
may

may be saved in his own Religion; and how far every man is left to enjoy the same; we may hope he will henceforth leave those to be determined by Principles of that Religion, which he concludes to be most reasonable to be believed and embraced.

FINIS.
